

Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
Silver Spring Urban Renewal Plan
Before the Montgomery County Council
March 8, 2011
Cindy Buddington, Commissioner

My name is Cindy Buddington, and I am here on behalf of the Commission on People with Disabilities.

Back in 2009, I testified on behalf of the Commission to recommend that the Council take action to amend the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD) Urban Renewal Plan to enable the County to build a bridge from the parking garage to the library, and include user friendly design that will accommodate as well as improve street access so that our entire community can use and enjoy this new library.

Tonight, I am pleased to be here to offer the Commission's strong support of President Valerie Ervin's amendment to the Silver Spring CBD that would allow for a pedestrian bridge if it complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act standards for accessible design, is permitted over Wayne Avenue, connecting the Wayne Avenue Garage with a County facility that includes a public library, located on the opposite side of Wayne Avenue outside of the Urban Renewal Area.

With respect to the walkway and elevators to be used in accessing the library, for persons who are blind or who have visual impairments we continue to be concerned about the level of accessible signage and way finding. Those with vision issues will need to find and understand the existence of the walkway, the elevators, and how to travel to the library and knowing where to go once inside. In short, a combination of large print, braille, and audible instructions would be helpful to those who do not see the route. Once inside the building, persons who are blind should be able to locate the elevators to go to the library and have large print, braille, and audible information available to them in finding the library. We also suggest that an audio recorded guide to the area be done by the library in order to give patrons who are blind the opportunity to better understand and utilize the environment surrounding them. This early introduction to the area would help with understanding what is happening around them as exemplified by the Purple Line.

In addition we recommend that all restroom doors be automated and that braille signage be placed on the wall next to the restroom door. Automated doors are not a requirement of the ADA, but makes restrooms more accessible for people with mobility impairments.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our recommendations with you regarding access issues in the Silver Spring Renewal. Please support the proposed changes to the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD) Urban Renewal Plan, and allow this bridge access to the Silver Spring Library from the Wayne Avenue Garage.